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SENATE BILL 2974 By
Ford J

HOUSE BILL 2816
By Bowers

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 65, relative to telecommunications services.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 65, Chapter 5, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

Section 65-5-214. (a) The Tennessee regulatory authority shall promulgate rules prohibiting a telecommunications service provider from discontinuing local exchange telephone service to a consumer who receives lifeline services because of nonpayment by the consumer of charges for other services billed by the provider, including long distance service.

(b) The authority shall promulgate rules providing for automatic enrollment to receive a lifeline service for eligible consumers. On request of the authority, each state agency shall assist in the adoption and implementation of those rules.

(c) A telecommunications service provider may block a lifeline service participant's access to all long distance except toll-free numbers when the participant owes an outstanding amount for that service. The telecommunications service provider

shall remove the block without additional cost to the participant on payment of the outstanding amount.

(d) A telecommunications service provider shall offer a consumer who applies for or receives lifeline service the option of blocking all toll calls or placing a limit on the amount of toll calls. The provider may not charge the consumer an administrative charge or other additional amount for the blocking service.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 65, Chapter 5, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

Section 65-5-215. The Tennessee regulatory authority shall promulgate rules providing for the automatic enrollment to receive link-up service for eligible consumers. On request of the authority, each state agency shall assist in the adoption and implementation of those rules.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 65, Chapter 5, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

Section 65-5-216.

(a) The Tennessee regulatory authority shall adopt rules prohibiting a telecommunications provider from discontinuing local exchange service to a consumer who receives link-up service because of nonpayment by the consumer of charges for other services billed by the provider, including long distance service.

(b) The telecommunications service provider may block a link-up service participant's access to all long distance service except toll-free numbers when the participant owes an outstanding amount for that service. The telecommunications service provider shall remove the block without additional cost to the participant on payment of the outstanding amount.

(c) A telecommunications service provider shall offer a consumer who applies for or receives link-up service the option of blocking all toll calls or placing a limit on the amount of toll calls. The provider may not charge the consumer an administrative charge or other additional amount for the blocking service.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000, the public welfare requiring it.